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Renovation and Commemoration

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Renovation and Commemoration

As students pass Old Botany in the coming months, they are likely to notice a slow transformation. This historic building, once slated for demolition, will soon be restored to house the Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics, offices of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the philosophy department.

Botany Hall, which opened in 1893 as the Agriculture Hall, was home to the agriculture, horticulture and veterinary medicine departments. At the time of its completion, an article published in the 1892-'93 Biennial Report said, "The new Agriculture Hall is one of the finest on the campus. It has one of the most commanding locations on campus and is every way a credit to the state and an inspiration to our work."

Scott Sankey, an architect with Facilities Planning and Management, said the fire marshal condemned the upper floors of the building in the late '70s. The basement and first floors were used for classroom space until the hall was closed for renovation in 1992.

While the original structure only cost \$35,000 in 1892, the renovation, which is expected to be completed in 1995, will cost approximately \$5 million. Upon completion of the renovation, the building will be renamed Carrie Chapman Catt Hall.



Photo by University Archives

Carrie Chapman Catt

Carrie Chapman Catt

From early on, Carrie Lane had a desire to make a difference. She graduated from high school in three years and took a job as a teacher to earn money for college.

"I wanted to go to college, but my father saw no need of further education for a girl and was not inclined to support my ambition," she said.

"One day, I announced that I had found a school to teach, had my certificate and contract in my pocket, and proposed to use the money to go to college."

Carrie entered Iowa State in 1877. At that time, the campus consisted of one main building and 250 students.

As an undergraduate she worked for equality among men and women. Carrie persuaded college officials to allow women to participate in orations, debate in literary clubs and join other campus societies. She was also responsible for the organization of Company G; the first drill company for women at Iowa State. When she graduated valedictorian in 1880, Carrie was the only female out of a class of 14.

Carrie began her work with women's suffrage following the death of her husband, Leo Chapman, in 1887. In 1890, she married former Iowa State classmate George W. Catt and moved to Boston. Continuing her work with the women's suffrage movement, she was appointed finance chair of the National American Woman Suffrage Association by Susan B. Anthony in 1892. Carrie eventually succeeded Anthony as president of the organization.

Following the ratification of the 19th Amendment in 1920, Carrie turned her attention to international matters. For the next 27 years, she worked for a number of committees and causes, including the League of Women Voters, the formation of the United Nations and a committee she founded to look at the causes and cures of war.

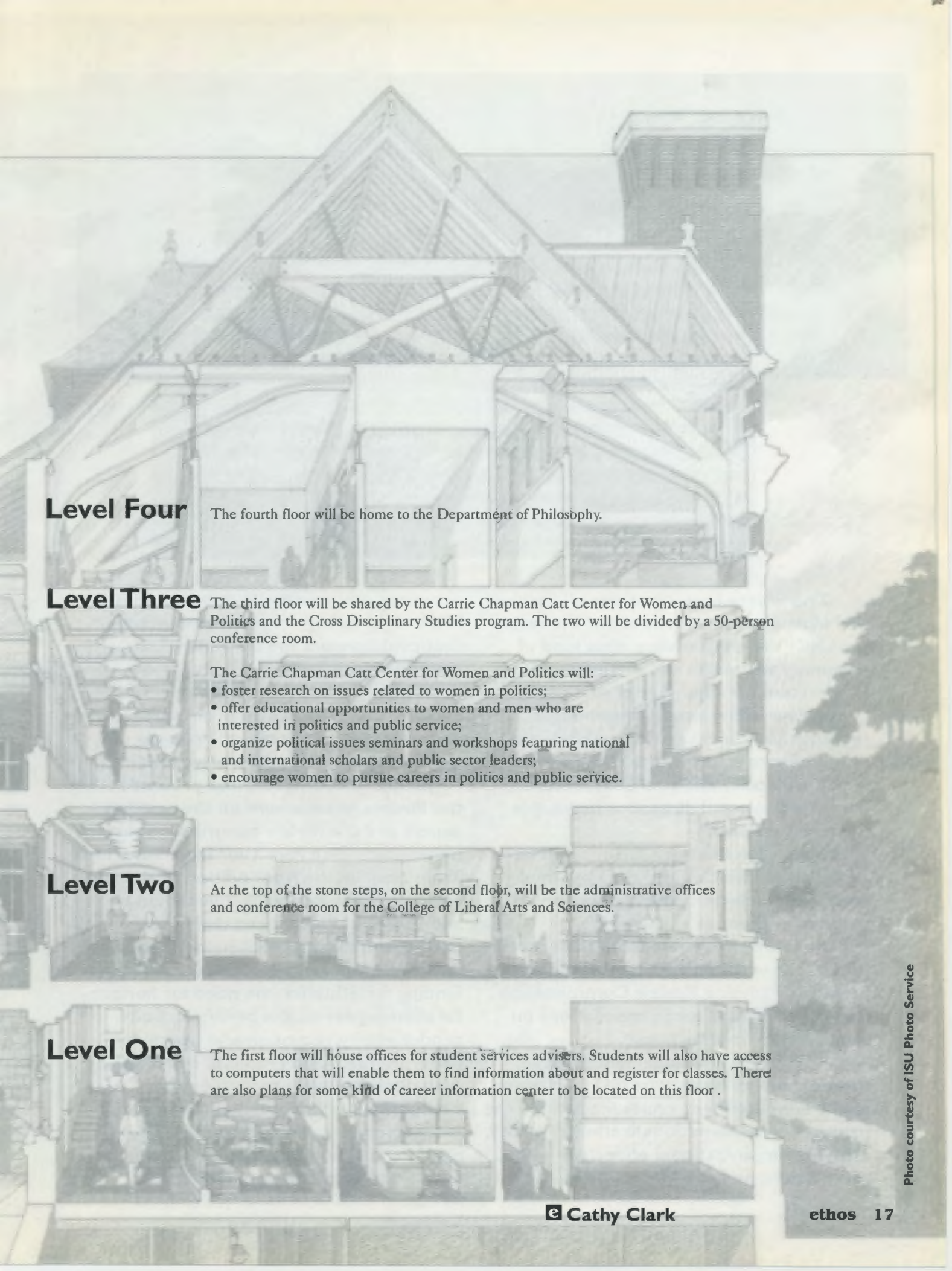
Although Carrie died in 1947, her legacy will live on through the Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics.

Plaza of Heroines

Before anyone can step foot in the new hall, he or she will have to cross the Plaza of Heroines. The Plaza will be constructed with bricks, stones and benches inscribed with the names of women who have inspired or helped others at sometime in their life.

"Most people can point to a woman who influenced their lives," Elizabeth Hoffman, dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences said in an interview with Inside Iowa State. "We want ISU's Plaza of Heroines to capture the essence of those ties."

Honorees need not be famous, and anyone can give a donation to the Plaza of Heroines and Botany Hall Renovation Project. Each inscribed brick will cost \$100. Larger stones may be selected for \$500 or \$1,000, and surrounding benches for \$10,000. All funds will be used for the construction of the plaza and the renovation project.



Level Four

The fourth floor will be home to the Department of Philosophy.

Level Three

The third floor will be shared by the Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics and the Cross Disciplinary Studies program. The two will be divided by a 50-person conference room.

The Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics will:

- foster research on issues related to women in politics;
- offer educational opportunities to women and men who are interested in politics and public service;
- organize political issues seminars and workshops featuring national and international scholars and public sector leaders;
- encourage women to pursue careers in politics and public service.

Level Two

At the top of the stone steps, on the second floor, will be the administrative offices and conference room for the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Level One

The first floor will house offices for student services advisers. Students will also have access to computers that will enable them to find information about and register for classes. There are also plans for some kind of career information center to be located on this floor.